



DoD Absentee Voting Improvements

Since 2000

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Federal Voting Assistance Program

6 August 2004



Eligible Absentee Voters

- **1.4 million military**
- **1.3 million military dependents of voting age**
- **.1 million Federal civilian employees overseas**
- **3.7 million overseas civilians, not affiliated with the Government**

More than six million potential voters



Voting Participation

- **The voting participation rate for the general public (FEC data)**
1996 – 49 % 2000 – 51%
- **Uniformed Services Participation**
1996 – 64 % 2000 – 69 %
- **Overseas U. S. Civilian Participation**
1996 – 37 % 2000 – 37 %
- **Federal Civilian Participation**
1996 – 68 % 2000 – 65 %

Source: Quadrennial Survey Report to President & Congress



Actions Taken

- **DOD Directive 1000.4 revised and published, June 3, 2002.**
 - Program scope and objective defined.
 - Defines DOD and Service roles and responsibilities.
- **Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252).**
- **Monthly review with Senior Service Voting Representative (GO/FO).**
- **Increased worldwide Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) training and workshops:**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2004</u>
VAO Training and Workshops Conducted	62	157

- **Interactive on-line training program established.**



Actions Taken - Continued

- **Federal Voting Assistance Program website (www.fvap.gov) reengineered to a comprehensive, one-stop source for information.**
- **Toll free phone access to FVAP increased from 58 to 66 countries.**
- **Actions taken to increase FVAP awareness:**
 - **Through: DeCA, Exchanges, DoDEA, AFRTS, Pentagon Channel.**
 - **Communicating a positive message in the press (National and local).**
 - **Presentations at Mobilization sites and Family Readiness Groups.**
 - **Overseas Citizens' Voters' Week – Jul 4-10, 2004 (C,JCS video)**
 - **Armed Forces Voters' Week – Sep 3-11, 2004**
 - **Absentee Voting Week – Oct 11-15, 2004**
- **Governors informed of the program and encouraged to support.**
- **Unit Voting Assistance Officers provided standard products to enhance training.**



Actions Taken - Continued

- **Actively urging State Election Officials to permit use of fax or electronic mail methods.**
 - States permitting fax delivery of blank ballot increased from 23 to 32
 - States permitting fax return of voted ballot increased from 17 to 23
 - Some jurisdictions allow for blank ballot delivery by email
 - On-line Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) now accepted by 53 states and territories.

- **Absentee ballot envelope design specifications and special markings to expedite processing.**

- **Contract awarded to facilitate email delivery of blank ballots from participating jurisdictions prior to election.**



Other Actions Taken: Postal Improvements

- **Special handling implemented by US Postal Service (USPS) for election materials sent to and returned from APO/FPO addresses per postal briefing on June 2, 2004**
- **USPS Postmasters contact local election officials to coordinate handling procedures for election materials**
- **Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) actions:**
 - **All units now have proper postmarking devices**
 - **Weekly messages on proper handling of ballots**
 - **Biweekly and weekly surveys of all Military Post Offices (MPO) to ensure no ballots are delayed**
 - **Published recommended mailing dates**



Keys to Success



- **Command Involvement**
- **Training**
- **Awareness**
- **Enhance Mail Operations**
- **Constant Vigilance**



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